

Narcotics Anonymous,  
**It Works:**  
How and Why



World Service Conference  
Literature Committee  
Approval Literature  
For WSC '87

Narcotics Anonymous (often referred to as N.A.) is a Fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. The Program of Narcotics Anonymous is based on spiritual principles, principles that are incorporated in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of N.A. Thousands of addicts have achieved total abstinence and ongoing recovery through the application of these principles.

In 1982, the book, *Narcotics Anonymous*, was first published. In its pages, the disease of addiction was described by recovering addicts who shared their personal experiences, strengths, and hopes. This book outlined a new way of life, and became known as the Basic Text of recovery. It provides general information and discussion about the principles of recovery found in the Narcotics Anonymous Program.

*It Works: How and Why* is intended to provide an in-depth explanation of the principles of the N.A. Program. The experience of countless recovering addicts has demonstrated that the N.A. Program works. These addicts have shared, through their collective experience, that the answer to *how* it works is the Twelve Steps. The answer to *why* it works is the application of the Twelve Traditions. Appropriately, this text is entitled *It Works: How and Why*.

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Part One

*A Guide to the Twelve Steps and  
Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous*



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*This book is dedicated to the entire Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous—to its newest and yet-to-be members, without whom there would be no opportunity to share the miracle of recovery; and to its older members, to whom we are gratefully indebted for showing us the way to a new life—in order that no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction.*



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## EPIGRAPH

**T**he principles of the N.A. Program are the keys to freedom from addiction. Our experience has shown that there are no boundaries on that freedom, as long as we practice those principles and stay clean. May a loving Power greater than yourself be with you as you learn to apply the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. As you practice these principles in all of your affairs, you will find a freedom and joy you never knew existed. These spiritual truths are the Narcotics Anonymous Program, and it is through them that *It Works!*

# C O N T E N T S

**Introduction**      1

## PART ONE: THE TWELVE STEPS

**Step 1**      7

*"We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable."*

**Step 2**      19

*"We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."*

**Step 3**      31

*"We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."*

**Step 4**      45

*"We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."*

**Step 5**      57

*"We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."*

**Step 6**      67

*"We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."*

**Step 7**      79

*"We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings."*

- Step 8** 89  
*"We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all."*
- Step 9** 99  
*"We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."*
- Step 10** 113  
*"We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."*
- Step 11** 125  
*"We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry that out."*
- Step 12** 139  
*"Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."*

## A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

The information for this text was drawn from the experiences of recovering addicts throughout the world. Particular effort was made to solicit participation from N.A.'s earliest members, who shared valuable knowledge and perspective, especially with regard to the Twelve Traditions. We are grateful to the many contributors for this book who are too numerous to list, and who in fact decline special mention in the spirit of anonymity. We would also like to express our appreciation to A.A. World Services, Inc., who granted permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. This book is offered, in a spirit of humility and gratitude, in the hope that all addicts may find recovery through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.